

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13 /071 W
-----032019 011823Z /44

R 011522Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7510
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 5647

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, IS
SUBJECT: THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT, THE FUTURE OF THE COALITION, AND
THE DMC

1. QUOTED BELOW IS THE SUMMARY OF A LONGER MESSAGE WHICH IS
BEING POUCHED AUGUST 2.

2. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S SUCCESSFUL TRIP TO
WASHINGTON IS BOUND TO STRENGTHEN HIS PERSONAL STATUS
AND REINFORCE HIS POSITION AS THE UNDISPUTED LEADER OF
THE GOVERNMENT. PERSONAL ATTACKS ON HIM OR HIS FOREIGN
POLICY BY A BADLY DIVIDED AND DEMORALIZED LABOR OPPOSITION WILL
DO LITTLE TO WEAKEN HIS POSITION IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE,
NOTWITHSTANDING HIS INITIAL OVER-REACTION TO THIS
CRITICISM UPON HIS RETURN. MOREOVER, THE KNESSET SUMMER
RECESS BEGINNING AUGUST 5 IS LIKELY TO SUSPEND LABOR'S
ABILITY TO CONTINUE ITS CHALLENGE OF BEGIN'S FOREIGN POLICY.
HIS AGREEMENT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER TO RESTRICT
PUBLIC DEBATE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S. ON
TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS UNTIL THE POSSIBILITY OF GOING
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TO GENEVA HAS BEEN FULLY EXPLORED WILL TEND TO MAKE
HIS POSITION ON FOREIGN POLICY DIFFICULT TO CHALLENGE.
THUS, WHILE THE FOREIGN POLICY ISSUE WILL CONTINUE
TO AGITATE THE ISRAELI PUBLIC AND PRESS, DEBATES
OVER TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS WILL APPEAR LESS URGENT
AND DIVISIVE, LEAVING BEGIN TO FACE A FORMIDABLE
SERIES OF DOMESTIC ISSUES WHICH WILL TEST HIS POLITICAL

SKILLS AND DETERMINE THE STRENGTH OF HIS PARTY, HIS MAJORITY, AND HIS ABILITY TO GOVERN. THE KEY ISSUES WILL BE REORGANIZATION OF THE LIKUD BY AMALGAMATING ITS FACTIONS INTO A SINGLE NEW PARTY; THE SHARPENING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE HERUT AND THE LIBERAL WINGS OF LIKUD ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC QUESTIONS; THE PROBLEM OF BROADENING THE GOVERNMENT'S MAJORITY AND OF BRINGING THE DMC NEGOTIATIONS TO AN EARLY CONCLUSION; AND COPING WITH EMOTIONALLY HIGHLY CHARGED RELIGIOUS ISSUES.

3. BEGIN WOULD PROBABLY PREFER TO LEAVE THE RESOLUTION OF MOST SUCH PROBLEMS TO OTHERS IN ORDER TO DEVOTE MOST OF HIS TIME AND ENERGY TO FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENSE ISSUES. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT HE WILL GET HIS WISH, SINCE NOW MORE THAN EVER HE ALONE HAS THE STATURE AND PRESTIGE TO IMPOSE CREDIBLE SETTLEMENTS ON THE CONTENDING PARTIES AND INDIVIDUALS. AS THE RECORD OF THE PAST SIXTY DAYS SHOWS, HE HAS SO FAR HANDLED SUCH PROBLEMS WITH NOTABLE SKILL. ON THE BASIS OF BOTH PUBLIC INFORMATION AND RECENT COMMENTS FROM LIKUD, DMC, AND LABOR PARTY ELEMENTS, THERE IS A GENERAL APPRECIATION TRANSCENDING PARTY LINES THAT BEGIN AS PRIME MINISTER WILL CAREFULLY SEEK TO ASSEMBLE AND COUNTERBALANCE POLITICALLY AND IDEOLOGICALLY DISPARATE ELEMENTS BY ASSIGNING ROLES TO DIFFERENT CONFIDANTS IN SUCH A CONFIDENTIAL

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WAY AS TO BE ABLE TO PLAY FACTION AGAINST FACTION AND PERSONALITY AGAINST PERSONALITY, EXPLOITING THEIR RIVALRIES AND CONFLICTS AND FORCING THEM TO TURN TO HIM AS ULTIMATE ARBITER. AT THE SAME TIME HE WILL TRY TO KEEP HIMSELF FREE OF PRIOR COMMITMENTS TO SOLVE CONFLICTS BY PROMISING ACCOMODATION TO BOTH SIDES, A TENDENCY WHICH, AT ANY RATE UNDER THE LABOR GOVERNMENT, HAD PROVIDED A STRONG INCENTIVE TO ESCALATE CONFRONTATIONS. THIS SHOULD ENABLE HIM TO DEAL WITH CONFLICTS AND PRESSURES IN A MOST ECONOMIC MANNER AND WITH MINIMAL PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT, THEREBY FREEING HIMSELF TO CONCENTRATE HIS PRINCIPAL ENERGIES ON FOREIGN POLICY AND OTHER KEY ISSUES CLOSE TO HIS HEART. END SUMMARY.
LEWIS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COALITION GOVERNMENT, POLITICAL STABILITY, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 01-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
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Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770275-0394
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197708108/aaaadotc.tel
Line Count: 109
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Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 56f82150-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT, THE FUTURE OF THE COALITION, AND THE DMC
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, IS, (BEGIN, MENAHEM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/56f82150-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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